

Having thus described the preferred embodiment, the invention is now claimed to be:

1. A method of treating a body which is contaminated with prions, the method comprising:

contacting the body with a composition comprising a phenol to inactivate prions on the body.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol includes at least one of the group consisting of p-chloro-*m*-xylanol, thymol, triclosan, 4-chloro, 3-methylphenol, pentachlorophenol, hexachlorophene, 2, 2-methyl-bis(4-chlorophenol), p-phenylphenol, and combinations thereof.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the composition further includes at least one of o-phenylphenol and o-benzyl-p-chlorophenol.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the phenol is at a concentration of at least 0.005M.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol is at a concentration of up to about 0.2M.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol has a log P_c value of between 2 and 6.5.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the phenol has a log P_c value between 2 and 5.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the phenol has a log P_c value of at least 4.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition includes a phenol at a concentration of at least about 10%.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition includes a soluble inorganic salt.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the soluble salt includes sodium chloride.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the sodium salt is present at a concentration of at least 2% by weight.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol includes OPP in a solution that includes brine.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol includes PCMX.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the phenol complexes with the prions and precipitates.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the phenol has minimal solubility.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein the phenol includes o-phenylphenol.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the body includes a surface and the method includes contacting the surface with the composition comprising the phenol to inactivate prions on the surface.

19. A method of determining the effectiveness of a phenol-based decontaminant composition on a material which is contaminated with prions comprising:

combining a solution of the phenol-based
5 decontaminant with a protein material; and

determining a measure of the phenol taken up by the protein material; and

determining the effectiveness of the composition based on the amount of phenol taken up.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the protein material includes at least one of a prion-containing material and bovine serum albumin.